

Hand Washing

Handwashing is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your family from getting sick.

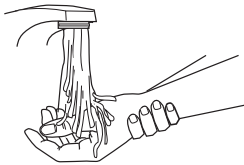
When you are in the hospital or being cared for by others, your caregivers and visitors also need to wash their hands often. Ask everyone if they have washed their hands before they touch you or things that may be used in your care.

Hand washing also needs to occur at home where care is done by the patient or family member. Hand washing must always be the first and last step of care and is needed even if gloves are worn.

How to Wash Your Hands

- Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap and apply soap.
- Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails. You can use a nail brush or old tooth brush to get under and around your nails.
- **Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds.**
- Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
- Use a paper towel or clean towel in your hand to turn off the water. This keeps your hand clean when you touch the faucet handle, which is not clean.
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

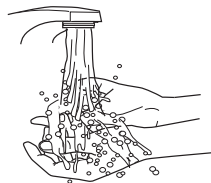
Hand Washing Steps



Wet hands, turn off water and add soap



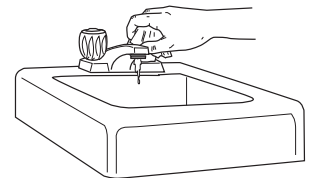
Lather soap and scrub hands for at least 20 seconds



Rinse



Dry



Turn off faucet with towel

Key Times to Wash Your Hands

- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Before, during and after preparing food
- Before eating
- Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet

- After touching an animal, animal feed or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage
- If your hands are visibly dirty or greasy

Remember that hands that look clean can still have germs on them.

Hand Sanitizer

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to remove all types of germs and chemicals. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

To clean your hands, put enough liquid on your hands to wet the front and back of your hands and your fingers. Rub the liquid briskly like you are washing your hands. Be sure to get between your fingers. Rub your hands until they are dry.